

Catch Shares Task Force Status Report – August 14, 2009

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This is the fourth in a series of reports on the status of the NOAA Catch Shares Task Force.

On August 10, 2009, I was joined by several participants from the Task Force and staff to brief NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco on the progress of the Task Force. Dr. Lubchenco was pleased with the Task Force's progress to date. While our original due date has slipped by a few weeks, the Administrator urged the Task Force to take the necessary time to adequately consider the issues at hand. There was significant discussion about topics generated by recent stakeholder listening sessions. In particular, Dr. Lubchenco asked that the upcoming policy give serious attention to the concerns raised about fairness and equity across sectors.

The following day Dr. Lubchenco briefed Secretary Locke on the current status and future developments in fisheries management using catch shares. The briefing included information on how and why catch shares programs are being used and the resources associated with program design and operation. The briefing was well received and we are following up on several topics including the derivation of new catch shares performance metrics.

The next Task Force conference call is scheduled for August 21, 2009. A fourth conference call may be convened after this date at Dr. Lubchenco's request. Based on input from the Task Force, I will submit my findings and recommendations to Dr. Lubchenco. An interim policy will be disseminated/posted for public review and comment via the web, email and other venues. We'll receive comments at least through November. During the public comment period, the interim policy will also be presented at each of the next scheduled regional fishery management council meetings, and other upcoming scheduled meetings and workshops of stakeholder organizations. Keep an eye on this website for updates on the release date of the interim policy and instructions for submitting comments.